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ABSTRACT

Never before has the need for effective mentoring programs for principals been more urgent. Record student enrollment, an anticipated retirement of about 40 percent of principals, and a shrinking pool of those who aspire to be principals has brought about a shortage of principals and an alarming lack of qualified applicants. This research roundup summarizes five literary resources useful in addressing this situation: "A Step into the Principalship" (Gary Bloom and Marty Krovetz); "The School Administrator Handbook: Leading, Mentoring, and Participating in the Internship Program" (Ronald L. Capasso and John C. Daresh); "Leaders Helping Leaders: A Practical Guide to Administrative Mentoring (Second Edition)" (John Daresh); "Albuquerque Principals Have ESP" (Carl J. Weingartner); "The Mentor's Guide" (Lois J. Zachary); and "Getting Personal: New York City's District Two Puts Priority on Principals" (Liz Willen). (RT)

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Research roundup

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2
WINTER 2001-2002

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Principal Mentoring: An Update

Robert J. Malone

A recent Carnegie Foundation study concluded that one of the most effective ways to prepare and support principals in their careers is to provide a mentoring program. But this is not an easy task. Many existing programs struggle to overcome such challenges as suitably matching mentors with protégés, scheduling meetings around time constraints, and ensuring that the program results in a productive learning experience for both members.

Never before has the need for effective mentoring programs for principals been more urgent. Record student enrollment, combined with the anticipated retirement of an estimated 40 percent of principals and a shrinking pool of those who aspire to be principals, has brought about not only a shortage of principals but an alarming lack of qualified applicants.

An earlier *Research Roundup* (Winter 2000-2001) discussed in general terms the benefits of principal mentorship and outlined how to establish mentoring programs, based on sound theory. This issue of *Research Roundup* moves beyond theory into the realm of practicality. As more school districts gain experience with mentorship programs, the lessons they have learned are instructive for other schools and districts that wish to establish their own programs.

The works reviewed here describe effective mentorship programs and how to establish them.

Gary Bloom and Marty Krovetz explain how one district laid the groundwork for mentorships by bringing together principals, assistant principals, and resource teachers.

Ronald L. Capasso and John C. Daresh created a handbook for principal programs that outlines the roles of all participants.

John C. Daresh has followed up on the internship handbook by publishing a second edition of his highly regarded guide to administrative mentoring.

Carl J. Weingartner describes an unusual program used by Albuquerque's schools to provide support for almost 100 new principals in six years.

Lois J. Zachary provides a handbook for mentors that emphasizes the cultivation of a relationship between mentor and protégé, and puts into practice the principles of adult learning.

Liz Willen describes a program in New York City that matches experienced mentors with protégés who are facing challenges their mentors have previously encountered.

Bloom, Gary, and Krovetz, Marty. **"A Step into the Principalship."** *Leadership* 30:3 (January/February 2001): 12-13. EJ 621 313. *Available online at:* **www.acsa.org/publications/pub_leadership**

Schools in Santa Cruz County, California, were facing a growing problem in finding principals. It wasn't uncommon for as few as two or three candidates to apply for administrative openings, making it necessary for the district to advertise repeatedly before vacancies could be filled. The lack of qualified applicants meant that assistant principals and resource teachers were being asked to step into the principalship after relatively short periods of preparation.

To meet this challenge, two area universities initiated a program, Growing Our Own, that brought

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principals, assistant principals, and resource teachers together to create principal apprenticeships. The group established a mentor/apprentice agreement based on restructuring the position of assistant principal into an apprenticeship that would support the work of the principal as a site leader. The program was reinforced through regularly scheduled meetings that focused on problem solving, in addition to quarterly meetings that assessed the assistant principals' goals and responsibilities.

The program has succeeded because it took an established administrative structure and used it to create mentor/apprenticeship relationships between principals and assistant principals. These relationships have not only nurtured the next generation of principals in the district, they have also encouraged experienced principals to reflect on their practices, thus enhancing their own professionalism.

Capasso, Ronald L., and Daresh, John C. **The School Administrator Internship Handbook: Leading, Mentoring, and Participating in the Internship Program.** Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, Inc., 2001. 169 pages. ED 449 563. *Available from:* Corwin Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320. $69.95 hardback, $32.95 paperback, plus $3.50 shipping and handling. 800-818-7243. Web site: **www.corwinpress.com**

Capasso and Daresh state that their aim for this handbook is "to provide those who are interested in the preparation of school administrators with an overview of the internship as a central ingredient of effective preservice programs." Therefore it is written for both the intern and the internship director.

The book helps interns to self-assess their leadership ability, strengthen their commitment, become reflective practitioners, and collaborate with their mentors. For the internship director, the book provides opportunities to assess the protégé's ability to move from theory to practice, to develop community outreach programs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire program.

To achieve these aims, the authors focus on ways that universities, internship sites (local school systems), and interns can form a partnership that enables them to function as a "minicohort." The book outlines how to organize and design a learning encounter that focuses on a realistic set of goals, and it addresses the specific skills that interns need to develop during their internship experience.

Capasso and Daresh also provide information on the specific roles that the university mentor, school mentor, and intern must fill during the internship. Mentors are shown how to evaluate and assess the intern and how to determine the intern's readiness to serve as an effective leader.

There is practical advice on how to define internship goals and objectives, establish relationships for a meaningful internship experience, and refine leadership goals. Each chapter contains questions and statements designed to make the reader think carefully and critically about the internship process.

Daresh, John C. **Leaders Helping Leaders: A Practical Guide to Administrative Mentoring (Second Edition).** Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, Inc., 2001. 130 pages. *Available from:* Corwin Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320. $69.95 hardback, $29.95 paperback, plus $3.50 shipping and handling. 800-818-7243. Web site: **www.corwinpress.com**

The key element in school improvement, according to this guidebook, is leadership. Good leaders make for effective organizations, and the fact that schools are losing leaders at an alarming rate makes it imperative that new leaders be properly trained.

The best way to train these leaders, Daresh claims, is to provide more effective professional development opportunities at both the school and district levels. Mentorship programs can play a vital role.

The book presents a three-phase mentoring model that outlines initial planning, implementation, and evaluation. It identifies the many benefits of mentoring to mentors, protégés, and districts, while also dealing with such potential problems as bad mentor-protégé matches and mentors who are too deeply involved with internal school system politics to be effective.

The book provides a step-by-step guide on how to initiate a program, determine the program's purpose, identify possible mentors, prepare people to be mentors, match mentors to protégés, nurture new protégés, and assess the program. Each chapter concludes with a summary and poses questions to help the reader evaluate each part of the mentoring process.

The text emphasizes professional development and underscores the need for school districts, intermediate educational agencies, state departments of education, and universities to become involved in the development of educational leaders. It also offers suggestions for steps a district should take after initiating a mentoring program in order to build long-lasting program support.

About ERIC

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system operated by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, one of 16 such units in the system, was established at the University of Oregon in 1966.

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Web site: http://eric.uoregon.edu

Weingartner, Carl J. **"Albuquerque Principals Have ESP."** *Principal* 80:4 (March 2001): 40, 42. *Available online at* **www.naesp.org/comm/p0301.htm**

Like many school districts across the country, the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Public Schools were finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified principals. Open positions would have to be advertised two or three times before a sufficient number of qualified applicants could be interviewed. This state of affairs prompted the Albuquerque schools to develop a unique support system for new principals.

In 1994, a group of elementary, middle, and high school principals formed a steering committee that came up with a program named Extra Support for Principals (ESP). The first course of action was to hire an experienced principal as the program coordinator, whose role was to establish the goals and objectives of ESP.

Since ESP is a voluntary program, the coordinator meets individually with newly hired principals to explain the program's benefits and invite them to participate. At these meetings, the coordinator focuses on the new principal's professional background, possible growth areas, perception of administrative style, and suggestions for inservice training.

The new principals who decide to participate are then asked to help select their own mentors by giving the coordinator a list of experienced principals they know, respect, and trust. The coordinator then contacts these potential mentors, who, if they agree to participate, receive a small stipend for the first year. The program's aim is to develop long-term bonds.

Each team determines its individual program. Because of time constraints, the ESP coordinator mandates just three activities: a get-acquainted/orientation meeting in October and two luncheon/inservice meetings in December and March.

In its first six years, ESP has provided mentors for nearly 100 first-year principals. Annual evaluations of the program indicate that it is appreciated by both new and mentor principals. In fact, 95 percent of those who have benefited from ESP recommend that all new principals participate in the program.

Zachary, Lois J. **The Mentor's Guide.** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 2000. 195 pages. *Available from:* Jossey-Bass, Inc., 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. $25.95 plus $5.00 shipping and handling. 888-378-2537. Web site: **www.josseybass.com**

Zachary notes that the focus of the mentoring relationship has shifted from guiding the novice principal to the cultivation of a strong mentoring relationship in keeping with the principles of adult learning. This shift in focus requires that a mentor facilitate the learning relationship rather than merely transfer knowledge.

An effective learning relationship, Zachary argues, consists of four phases. In the first phase, the mentor prepares to enter into a learning relationship with a new principal. In the second phase, dialogue between the partners allows them to map out the learning path they will follow.

The third phase—the longest and most crucial—is where learning occurs. It is here that the partners face their greatest challenges and must work closely together to ensure that the learning objectives are being met. Finally, in the fourth phase, the learning goals have been achieved and the relationship either comes to an end or is renegotiated. Knowledge of these phases greatly contributes to creating a solid understanding of the learning that takes place in the mentoring relationship.

This book lays out the learning processes of mentoring from beginning to end and provides tools for creating an effective relationship. The examples used are drawn from actual mentoring experiences in a variety of situations. Tools and guidelines for those who administer and supervise mentoring programs are appended.

Willen, Liz. **"Getting Personal: New York City's District Two Puts Priority on Principals."** *Journal of Staff Development* 22:1 (Winter 2001): 47-49. EJ 620 729. Available online at **www.nsdc.org/educatorindex.htm**

Like the ESP program in Albuquerque (Weingartner), a program developed by New York City's District Two in partnership with a local college offers experienced principals a stipend to act as mentors to other principals—not necessarily beginners—who need help.

Each fall the superintendent identifies a group of experienced principals to serve as mentors. Great care is taken to match the skills of these mentors with the needs of the principals they will assist.

At the beginning of the school year, the pairs of principals attend a kickoff meeting. After that, they meet at least once a week and are in frequent phone contact. The mentors also meet with other mentors to discuss mentoring, and to share activities and success stories.

District Two's program has succeeded where other programs have failed because it emphasizes a commitment to professional development and the development of new leaders. The principals in District Two do not dwell on the stress of their jobs as much as they discuss ways to cope with it. They know that they can call on any number of colleagues—not just their assigned mentors—for advice and support, and the resulting collegiality has proven effective in keeping principals in their jobs.

District Two principals are not afraid to seek advice from their colleagues, and when they see a program or school that is working, they are eager to learn and share the strategies that led to success. The atmosphere of mutual support goes even beyond mentoring in keeping principals focused and effective. □

NAESP's Mentor Center

One of the best ways to curb the principal shortage is to match every principal with a mentor. This is especially valuable for first-year principals, but no less valuable for veteran principals. Mentors provide valuable advice, useful suggestions, and an objective opinion. Without mentors, principals would be constantly reinventing the wheel.

To help NAESP members network, share their best ideas, suggestions, and advice, and possibly find a mentor, NAESP has created the "Mentor Center." This feature, which appears in NAESP's *Communicator* newsletter, gives principals an opportunity to help one of their own.

Each month, *Communicator* will ask you for advice, suggestions, and ideas to help first-year principal Barbara Martin navigate the ups and downs of the principalship. After reading each issue, visit **www.naesp.org/mentorcenter/** to offer your two cents' worth.

Past topics have included keeping up with correspondence, starting and running a parent volunteer program, reading program incentives, and parent-teacher conferences. Stop by **www.naesp.org/mentorcenter/** and put the research you've just read into practice!

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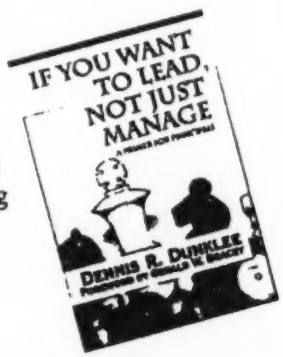

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